

Message Text

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ORIGIN SCA-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 SCS-05 H-02 SS-15 SIG-02 MMO-04
DHA-02 L-03 NSC-05 JUSE-00 SNM-02 DEAE-00 ISO-00
/056 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/AND:SHPATTERSON:SCA/SCS:AAGISE:SCA:JDEWITT:RE
APPROVED BY SCA:BMWATSON
SCA-JDEWITT (DRAFT)
ARA - WSTEDMAN (DRAFT)
M - JOAN M. CLARK, ACTING
H - MR. KRIZEK

-----057858 092201Z /72/63

P 092035Z AUG 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS PRIORITY

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INFORM CONSULS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON PROTECTIVE CONSULAR
SERVICES

1. ALL POSTS SHOULD BE AWARE OF CURRENT CONGRESSIONAL
HEARINGS INTO THE PERFORMANCE OF THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSI-
BILITIES IN THE PROTECTION OF U.S. CITIZENS RESIDING OR
TRAVELING ABROAD. DURING THE WEEK OF JULY 11, THE SUB-
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS OF THE HOUSE INTER-
NATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE, CHAIRED BY CONGRESSMAN DANTE
FASCELL (D - FLA), HELD A SERIES OF HEARINGS ON PROBLEMS
ENCOUNTERED BY AMERICANS TRAVELING OVERSEAS WITH THE GOAL OF
EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DEPARTMENT IN CARRYING
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OUT ITS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR OUR CITIZENS. SENATOR
HUMPHREY'S SUBCOMMITTEE ON FOREIGN ASSISTANCE OF THE SENATE
FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE ALSO HAS PLANNED HEARINGS ON
CONSULAR FUNCTIONS. CHAIRMAN FASCELL HAD EARLIER REQUESTED
THE SECRETARY TO CONDUCT A REVIEW OF THE CONSULAR FUNCTION
AND TO PRESENT A REPORT. THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE
FOREIGN SERVICE BEGAN AN INSPECTION ON AUGUST 1.

2. THE FASCELL HEARINGS FOCUSED PRINCIPALLY ON BOLIVIA (AMERICAN PRISONERS); CHILE (DEATHS DURING THE COUP);

PERU (DISAPPEARANCE OF AN AMERICAN CITIZEN); AND ECUADOR (DEATH AND DISAPPEARANCE CASES). FAMILY MEMBERS CRITICIZED WHAT THEY DEEM TO HAVE BEEN CALLOUS AND INADEQUATE ATTENTION TO THEIR PROBLEMS BY THE EMBASSIES CONCERNED AND THE DEPARTMENT.

3. THE DEPARTMENT WAS REPRESENTED BY SCA ADMINISTRATOR BARBARA WATSON AND ARA DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY STEDMAN AND SEVERAL BACK-UP WITNESSES. MISS WATSON ADDRESSED THE DIFFICULTIES CAUSED BY THE DRAMATICALLY INCREASING CONSULAR WORKLOAD COMPARED TO THE INCREASE IN RESOURCES; THE EMOTIONAL STRAINS INVOLVED IN CONSULAR WORK; AND THE DIFFICULTY IN MAINTAINING HIGH MORALE AMONG CONSULAR OFFICERS. SHE STRESSED OUR INTENTION TO PROVIDE EFFICIENT AND COMPASSIONATE SERVICES TO ALL AMERICAN CITIZENS ABROAD.

4. AMBASSADOR STEDMAN SUMMARIZED THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY AMERICANS IN LATIN AMERICA, SPECIFICALLY THE AMERICAN PRISONERS IN BOLIVIA, AND THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES ARISING FROM THE BOLIVIAN NARCOTICS LAW WHICH AFFECT THEIR CASES. MISS WATSON AND AMBASSADOR STEDMAN THEN RESPONDED TO SEVERE CRITICISMS OF THE DEPARTMENT AND THE FIELD.
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CONGRESSMAN JEROME A. AMBRO (D-NY), WHO SAT WITH THE SUBCOMMITTEE FOR THIS HEARING BECAUSE OF HIS INTEREST IN THE MISSING AMERICANS IN ECUADOR, WAS ESPECIALLY INSISTENT IN HIS LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN PROMPT AND EFFECTIVE HANDLING OF SUCH CASES.

5. CONGRESSMEN FASCELL AND BUCHANAN, AS THE RANKING MAJORITY AND MINORITY MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE, INDICATED THEIR INTEREST IN MORE SUPPORT FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S CONSULAR OPERATIONS, AND MORE ATTENTION TO THE MORALE AND PRESTIGE OF CONSULAR OFFICERS BY THE DEPARTMENT. THE SUBCOMMITTEE IS DETERMINED TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE DEPARTMENT TO UPGRADE THE CONSULAR PROGRAM.

6. THE INCREASING PUBLIC CONCERN OVER THE WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT AND POSTS OVERSEAS IN CASES CONCERNING U.S. CITIZENS HAS BEEN GIVEN CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION BY THE PRESS AND MEDIA. TELEVISION PROGRAMS AND NEWSPAPERS HAVE GIVEN WIDE COVERAGE TO SUCH PROBLEMS INCLUDING AMERICAN PRISONERS IN BOLIVIA AND MEXICO AND MISSING CITIZENS IN ECUADOR. NBC RECENTLY TELEVISED AN HOUR-LONG "DOCUMENTARY" ON THE THREE MISSING AMERICANS IN ECUADOR AND THE

DEATH CASE. THE PRODUCER/REPORTER OF THE NBC DOCUMENTARY ATTENDED AND FILMED THE FASCELL SUBCOMMITTEE HEARINGS. A SEVERELY CUT AND EDITED SECTION OF THE TESTIMONY, WHICH WAS QUITE UNFAVORABLE TO THE DEPARTMENT, WAS SHOWN

ON THE NBC NATIONAL EVENING NEWS ON JULY 15.

7. WHILE ARA COUNTRIES ACCOUNT FOR A SIGNIFICANTLY LARGER PERCENTAGE OF THE CASES CURRENTLY UNDER SCRUTINY THAN ANY OTHER WORLD AREA, BECAUSE OF THE WIDESPREAD PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST AND ITS CURRENT CRITICAL TENOR, ALL POSTS ARE REQUESTED TO GIVE INCREASED ATTENTION TO CONSULAR WORK.

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8. IN PARTICULAR, THERE MUST BE CONCERTED FOLLOW-UP ON SERIOUS PROTECTION CASES, INCLUDING ACTIVE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE INVESTIGATORY OR OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES. ALL OFFICERS AND LOCAL EMPLOYEES MUST CONSTANTLY BEAR IN MIND THE NEED TO DEMONSTRATE SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING IN DEALING WITH THE VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES. OFFICERS MUST CONTINUALLY BEAR IN MIND THE NECESSITY OF KEEPING ACCURATE AND COMPLETE RECORDS OF ACTIONS TAKEN IN PROTECTION CASES. A DETAILED CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS INCLUDING NOTATIONS OF ACTIONS TAKEN, PERSONAL VISITS AND TELEPHONE CALLS SHOULD BE MAINTAINED. GOOD AND COMPLETE RECORDS HAVE PROVED INVALUABLE IN RESPONDING TO THE MANY QUESTIONS RECEIVED. WE ANTICIPATE CONTINUED SCRUTINY OF AMERICAN PROTECTION CASES BY THE CONGRESS AND THE PUBLIC IN THE FUTURE. WE, THEREFORE, URGE ALL POSTS TO ENSURE THAT DETAILED AND CAREFUL RECORDS ARE KEPT. A SHORT TIME SPENT INSERTING A NOTE OR MEMO IN THE FILES MAY WELL PREVENT THE DEPARTMENT IN GENERAL, OR THE PARTICULAR POST OR ACTION OFFICERS, FROM UNFAIR OR HARSH CRITICISM AT SOME SUBSEQUENT DATE.

9. WHILE CRITICISM HEAVY AND SOMETIMES APPEARS UNJUST, DEPARTMENT RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING WORK BEING PERFORMED UNDER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES BY VAST MAJORITY OF CONSULAR OFFICERS.

10. COPIES OF THE STATEMENTS OF MISS WATSON, AMBASSADOR STEDMAN, AND CHAIRMAN FASCELL WILL BE AIR POUCHED SEPARATELY TO ALL POSTS. CHRISTOPHER

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Disposition Event:
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